

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 906

By Cooper B

A RESOLUTION to commend Laurice E. Smith for her honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee as Chair of the National Civil Rights Museum's Community Oversight Committee.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable public servants who have dedicated themselves to advancing the cause of civil rights and improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Laurice E. Smith is one such estimable person who evinces the greatest integrity and probity in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, throughout her exemplary tenure as the Chair of the National Civil Rights Museum's Community Oversight Committee, Laurice Smith has distinguished herself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and as an exceptional asset to her community; and

WHEREAS, during the recent negotiations held between the State of Tennessee and the Board of Directors of the National Civil Rights Museum, Ms. Smith served as the Chair of the Community Oversight Committee, representing the needs of the Memphis and Shelby County community; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Smith proved indispensable in the negotiations that resulted in a Memorandum of Understanding between the State and the National Civil Rights Museum that delineated a number of objectives to enhance and improve the operations, management, and administration of the National Civil Rights Museum and provide for a greater awareness of the purpose, activities, and substantive programs of the Museum, while preserving the truth, integrity, and authenticity of the Civil Rights Movement and promoting and encouraging community involvement; and

WHEREAS, in 1989, Ms. Smith established her General Civil Law/Litigation and Elder Law Practice in Memphis; she further serves as a part-time Assistant Shelby County Attorney,

representing Shelby County Government in a variety of legal areas, including workers' compensation and personal injuries; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Laurice Smith also serves as a Court-Appointed Attorney at Juvenile Court to represent indigent fathers on the contempt docket; a Court-Appointed Attorney to represent indigent mentally ill patients in the General Sessions Court; and as a Guardian ad Litem for Juvenile Court, Probate Court, Chancery Court, and Circuit Court; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Smith has further served her community as a Pro Bono Mediator for the Citizens Dispute Mediation Center since 2005; Contract Mediator for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), Memphis District Office, from 1999 to 2000; Special City Court Prosecutor, City of Memphis, from 1998 to 2000; Administrative Law Judge, EEOC, Memphis District Office from 1985 to 1989; and as Assistant City Attorney, City Attorney's Office, from 1984 to 1985; and

WHEREAS, Laurice Smith commenced her career in law as a Reginald Heber Smith Fellow, assigned to Memphis Area Legal Services, Inc., in 1980; she then served as a staff attorney with the company until 1982, at which time she accepted a position with the City of Memphis as a City Prosecutor; and

WHEREAS, licensed to practice law in Tennessee in 1981, Ms. Smith holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from California State University at Long Beach and a J.D. degree from the University of Georgia School of Law; and

WHEREAS, Laurice Smith's remarkable success as a public servant and civic leader is directly attributable to her reliance on the time-honored values of hard work and common sense and her uncommon ability to work well with people from all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, Ms. Smith epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional, dedicated public servant, and reliable friend and neighbor; and

WHEREAS, Laurice Smith is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and she should be specially recognized for her outstanding public service as the Chair of the Community Oversight Committee to the Board of Directors of the National Civil Rights Museum; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE

CONCURRING, that we hereby commend Laurice E. Smith for her honorable and astute service to the good people of Tennessee as the Chair of the of the National Civil Rights Museum's Community Oversight Committee and salute her unswerving commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.